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SPEECH

DELIVERED AT PEMBROKE, 27TH OCTOBER, 1870,

BY THE

HON. SIR F. HINCKS, C.B., K.C.M.G.,

MINISTER OF FINANCE, CANADA,

ERRATA.

On page 14, in the 5th line from the bottom, instead of
“ 30 millions ” read “ 15 millions.”

PUBLIC AFFAIRS.



OTTAWA.

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HON. SIR F. HINCKS, C.B., K.C.M.G.,

MINISTER OF FINANCE, CANADA,

ON

PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

SIR FRANCIS HINCKS commenced by stating that it had been his intention, since the close of the last session of Parliament, to take a suitable opportunity of meeting as many of the constituency of North Renfrew, as could conveniently assemble in the county town, so as to afford them an opportunity of hearing his views on the leading questions of the day, and of demanding any explanations as to his public conduct that they might require. He had, after consulting as many of his constituents as he had had an opportunity of meeting, arrived at the conclusion that the present month would be the most convenient time for his visit, and although he had, at one time, hoped to have come a few weeks sooner, he was glad that the delay had afforded him an opportunity of seeing a report of a speech recently delivered in East Elgin by the leader of the Parliamentary opposition, Mr. Mackenzie, in which the composition and policy of the present Government was denounced in the most unmeasured terms. A similar denouncement had been made by the same gentleman at a meeting, held in London on Monday last, of which he had not yet seen a report, though from a telegram which he had received, he had reason to believe that the charges were substantially the same. He concurred in opinion with Mr. Mackenzie, that such meetings were necessary in a free country like ours. He, for his own part, courted the fullest

discussion of the policy of the Government, and he did not desire to hold office one hour longer than public opinion would support him in doing so. It was his intention to grapple with the various charges preferred by Mr. Mackenzie against the Government of which he had the honor to be a member ; but before going into details such as the Tariff and the Coal Tax, the Banking Policy, Red River and Inter-colonial Railway Policy, he would join issue with Mr. Mackenzie as to his attack on Coalition Governments, which he had most erroneously described as governments not based on party combination. He would cite Mr Mackenzie's words : " now we were told at the present time that there should be no parties, but how could there be political existence in a nation without political parties ? If there be a Government, and if they have no party, then it followed that they had no policy or principles." Now he (Sir Francis Hincks) maintained, and would prove by reference to the history of our country, not only that Coalition Governments were necessary and desirable in the interests of the country, but that so far from their aiming at putting an end to party, it had invariably followed that party combination was never more active than during the existence of Coalition Governments, and a better proof of the truth of this statement could not be given than the active opposition offered by the Brownites to Sir John Macdonald's Government, since the resignation of the gentleman who has for several years been dictator of a faction in the Province of Ontario. Coalition Governments were the necessary consequence of there being three distinct parties in the State, and of it being impossible for any one of those three antagonistic parties to carry on the Government without assistance. In the public interest, therefore, party leaders had to make such concessions on minor points, and had especially to sacrifice all mere personal feelings, so as to enable them to form a strong Government. It would be found that the two parties having the greatest similarity of views coalesced against the third, which was in antagonism to both, and the natural and invariable result was that the third party became more violent than it had been previously. The consequence of coalitions was tolerance of open questions ; and when such a result took place, no doubt they were open to censure, but he (Sir F. Hincks) would shew the benefits that had resulted from coalitions. The first coalition to which he would refer was the memorable one of 1660, which was formed of the Tory Churchmen and Moderate Presbyterians, and which rescued the country from a military despotism, by restoring King Charles the Second to the throne. It cannot be said that party was extinguished during the reign of that sovereign or his successor. On the contrary, it raged with such bitterness, that in less than

thirty years, after frequent executions for high treason, a new coalition was formed, and one to which the people of England owe their civil and religious liberties. That great coalition effected the Revolution of 1688, which eventually brought about the change of dynasty, which substituted the House of Hanover for the House of Stuart. Will it be denied that there were then three parties? The high Tories, who adhered to King James the II. ; the more patriotic Tories, who joined the third party of Whigs in inviting the Prince of Orange to deliver England from despotism. But was party extinguished? Far from it. Never was there greater party virulence than during the next sixty years, during which two formidable rebellions occurred, to say nothing of plots to assassinate King William, and to effect another restoration of the doomed race which had been dethroned. The next coalition to which he would refer, was that memorable one of Lord North and Mr. Fox, which was very generally condemned at the time, though the student of the history of the reign of King George the Third may easily find excuses for a coalition, intended chiefly to check the undue influence of the Crown. But how was that coalition brought about? On Lord North's resignation, owing to the disastrous results of the American revolutionary war, a Whig Government had been formed by Lord Rockingham, in which Mr. Fox and the Earl of Shelburne were Secretaries of State. Lord Rockingham died suddenly, and shortly after the formation of the Government, and Mr. Fox became the recognized chief of the Whig party, and expected the premiership. The king sent for Lord Shelburne, with whom Mr. Fox refused to act, and the ministerial party became divided. Then was formed a coalition between the Tories, under Lord North, and the Whigs under Mr. Fox, to oppose Lord Shelburne's Government, which coalition was generally denounced as a factious one on the part of the Whigs. It was not more factious however, than Mr. Brown's combination with the Conservative opposition in 1854, to defeat the Government of that day. The regular opposition is justified in availing itself of any support it can obtain on such occasions, but the minority of a party which acts from factious motives generally comes to grief, as did Mr. Fox and Mr. Brown. The two parties, led respectively by Lord North and Mr. Fox, succeeded in defeating Lord Shelburne's Government, and in forming a coalition, which was soon replaced by Mr. Pitt's Government, which lasted many years, and which, after a short interval obtained the support of the Tory followers of Lord North. The next coalition to which he would refer was one in our own time. The Conservative party was split asunder by the adoption of Free Trade by Sir Robert Peel and

his followers. Lord Derby seceded from the Government with a small following of the members of the Government, but with the approbation of a majority of the Conservative party. Sir Robert Peel carried his measures with the aid of the Liberals, but was soon compelled to resign, owing to the combined opposition of the Conservatives and Liberals. The result was the existence of three parties, which led to the coalition in 1852 under the Earl of Aberdeen, after a trial of two weak governments under Lord John Russell and Lord Derby respectively. That coalition was clearly a justifiable one, and necessary in order to secure for the nation a strong and united Government. But parties did not cease to exist because two of the three parties were combined. On the occasion of the formation of that Government Lord Aberdeen delivered a speech from which he (Sir F. Hincks,) would cite a passage:—

“My Lords, I declare to the noble Earl (Derby) that in my opinion no government in this country is now possible except a Conservative Government, and to that I add another declaration which I take to be as indubitably true, that no Government in this country is now possible, except a Liberal Government. The truth is, that these terms have no definite meaning. I never should have thought of approaching my noble friend, the member for the City of London (Lord John Russell) unless I had thought he was Conservative, and I am sure he never would have associated himself with me, unless he had thought that I was Liberal. My Lords, these terms it may be convenient to keep up for the sake of party elections, but the country is sick of these distinctions which have no real meaning, and which prevent men from acting together who are able to perform good service to the Crown and to the country. I trust, therefore, that in the just acceptance of the word, whatever the measures proposed by the present Government may be, they will be Conservative measures as well as Liberal, for I consider both qualities to be essentially necessary.”

(The reading of this passage was followed by great cheering.) He (Sir F. Hincks) believed that the language of the Earl of Aberdeen, in 1852, was strictly applicable to the present Government of the Dominion. It was on the occasion of the Aberdeen coalition that Mr. Disraeli uttered the dictum which the *Globe* has lately quoted with triumph—“England does not love coalitions.” He (Sir F. Hincks) could perfectly comprehend that Mr. Disraeli did not like the Aberdeen coalition any more than Mr. Brown and Mr. Mackenzie did that of 1854, which, according to the declaration of the latter, both at Aylmer and London, had led to such “disastrous results.” But he (Sir F. Hincks) would amend the dictum of Mr. Disraeli by saying—“Those who suffer by coalitions

do not like them." The Aberdeen coalition had lasted to this day, one of the Conservative members of it being now the leader of a Government of which Mr. Bright is a member. So had the coalitions both of 1854 and 1864 lasted, notwithstanding the defection of the Brownites. To those coalitions he (Sir F. Hincks) would now advert. At the general election in 1854, the old Reform party was split asunder by the secession of a faction under the leadership of Mr. Brown. Nothing could be more unfair than the tactics then adopted. He himself had been returned for two constituencies, one as Liberal and one as any in Western Canada, after every effort having been made by Mr. Brown, Mr. W. L. Mackenzie, and Mr. McDougall to cause his defeat. His colleagues in the Government had likewise been elected, but in the Reform Constituencies every effort was used by Mr. Brown to defeat supporters of the Government by giving the preference to Conservatives, while in those places where Mr. Brown's supporters were candidates they invariably got the support of his (Sir F. Hincks') friends, who were a very large majority of the Reformers throughout the country. On the meeting of Parliament he (Sir F. Hincks) did all in his power to prevent division, but without success. It became apparent that there were three distinct parties, and that without coalition all government would be impossible. No one acquainted with the state of parties at the time could doubt that the only possible coalition that could be formed, was one between the Conservative party, led by Sir Allan MacNab, and the Lower Canada majority, led by Mr. Morin. His own support, and that of the friends with whom he acted, depended on the policy of the Government, and when he found that that would be decidedly Liberal, he felt it his duty not to lend himself to the facious combination of the Brownites. He was charged with having betrayed his party. In what way had he (Sir F. Hincks) betrayed men who had seceded entirely from his party, and who had spared no effort to destroy him? His own friends had acted most cordially with him, and had continued to support the coalition then formed. He would now advert to the last coalition to which Mr. Brown was a party, and he asked whether that had really effected a cessation of party strife. On the contrary, it was only in Upper Canada that any coalition was effected. If reference were made to the Ministerial explanations, which he held in his hand, it would be found that Mr. Brown had at first proposed that two members were to be brought in from Lower Canada and four from Upper Canada. Both propositions were peremptorily refused. Whether Mr. Dorion and Mr. Holton were prepared to have accepted Confederation on the condition of obtaining political power and place does not appear, but he (Sir F. Hincks) believed

that neither of those gentlemen would have done so. He further believed that Mr. Brown was held by many, both in Upper and Lower Canada, to have betrayed his friends, and he knows that many of the Clear Grits, who are to be distinguished from Brownites, or the mere servile followers of Mr. Brown, disapproved of Mr. Brown's conduct in 1864. He (Sir Francis Hincks) was of a different opinion, he thought Mr. Brown justified in accepting office, but not in his resignation, which was wholly without excuse. The ground of resignation was not one on which a new party could be formed. Can the followers of Mr. Brown give any statesmanlike reason for their support of the Government one day and their opposition to it the next, but that they were bound to submit to Mr. Brown's caprice? (Here Mr. Findlay interrupted Sir F. Hincks, to say that Sir John A. Macdonald had approved of Mr. Brown's resignation.) Sir F. Hincks did not believe this possible, but if it were the case, then he (Sir F. Hincks) could not concur in that opinion. He had already adverted to the evils sometimes caused by Coalition Governments having open questions. He well recollected the time of Lord Liverpool's Government, when the whole Kingdom, but especially Ireland, was agitated by the discussion of the question of Catholic Emancipation; and yet, when the peace of the country was almost in danger, Mr. Canning was making brilliant speeches in support of emancipation, while his colleague, Mr. Peel, was as vehement in opposition to the measure. The ballot had been an open question for years with all Liberal Governments in England, and was so up to the present time; but in Sir John Macdonald's Government there had been no open question, and in his (Sir F. Hincks') opinion it would be impossible to form a Government that would be more united. He had joined that Government believing it to be Liberal, but he rejoiced to think that, at a time when all kinds of speculative theories were discussed, such as annexation and independence, the Government was essentially Conservative. Meantime, there was an opposition of an essentially factious character without one single principle in common. Mr. Mackenzie and his Brownite followers are doing all in their power to maintain party lines of distinction which are incomprehensible to people outside of the Province of Ontario. If we turn to Nova Scotia, it will be found that at the opening of the present Parliament, seventeen out of the nineteen members for Nova Scotia generally voted with Mr. Mackenzie. (Mr. Findlay stated here, that Mr. Howe had never pretended to be of the party of Mr. Mackenzie). Sir F. Hincks.—If the gentleman had not interrupted me, he would have learned that my object was to shew that the Brownites had no sympathy from Nova Scotia.

The opposition in that Province had been to the conditions of the Union Act; and when concessions, which were deemed reasonable, were made, the opposition ceased to exist. Mr. Mackenzie's Nova Scotia tail consisted of one member—an avowed Annexationist—and another, who was so bitter an Anti-Confederate that he refused to attend Parliament. If we turn to New Brunswick, we find Mr. Mackenzie's principal allies to be Mr. Anglin and Mr. Hutcheson, members of the Anti-Confederate Government, and, moreover, supporters of the Northern Railway route, together with a few other gentlemen dissatisfied because the Southern Railway route had not been adopted. In Quebec, Mr. Mackenzie acts with the leaders of the opposition, Mr. Dorion and Mr. Holton, with whom he had no sympathies in common. The grand object of the Brownites is to perpetuate the local and national animosity which it was a main object of confederation to get rid of. At the Aylmer meeting, Mr. Bodwell, one of the most subservient adherents of Mr. Brown, avowed that the great reason that confederation was welcomed by the people of Ontario was, that "it was expedient to put a stop to French domination, but they found that this result had not been accomplished, and there existed greater dissatisfaction at the present time, owing to the bad Government which controlled its destinies, than had prevailed before confederation was accomplished." He (Sir Francis Hincks) earnestly implored all real friends to confederation; all those anxious for the peace, prosperity, and good government of the country, to ponder well on the foregoing words. The Brownites were parties to the terms of confederation, their avowed object being to lessen the influence of the French Canadian element which is now represented by three members in a Cabinet of thirteen. The old cry is as current as ever; and in order to give it a colour, the *Globe* is not ashamed to represent the leader of the Government as incapable of exercising the influence which belongs to his office. The object is transparent. "The Province of Quebec," says the *Globe*, "has an active and ever vigilant eye to certain interests always at headquarters." The other ministers are "miserable creatures enough," but "even them a man of firm and active mental constitution might flog into decent order." Such language is significant, and most characteristic of the man who flogs every one of his followers who dares to utter an independent opinion. Sir John Macdonald would never have preserved his influence and power as he has done had he not been more tolerant of the opinions of his colleagues than Mr. Brown, from his temper, can ever be expected to be. He (Sir Francis Hincks) would cast back with scorn the imputation thrown upon himself and his colleagues, as well from Ontario as the maritime provinces, that

they had ever surrendered their independent judgment to any man. He defied his slanderers to point to an act of his, during a public life of upwards of thirty years, to justify the imputation that, for the sake of maintaining office he would acquiesce in a policy of which he disapproved. There was nothing in his estimation more detestable than the persistent attempt of a miserable faction in Ontario to endeavor to array one section of the population against another. Sir George Cartier, who enjoys a large share of influence in the Province of Quebec, is constantly held up as an enemy to the Province of Ontario. A more unfounded aspersion could not by possibility be cast upon any one. There is not in the Dominion a truer Canadian, nor one more anxious to foster feelings of attachment to Canada, irrespective of locality, race, or religion, than Sir George Cartier. What he (Sir F. Hincks), would ask, do the Brownites really mean? Are they of opinion that the Province of Quebec is to have no voice in the Dominion Government, or that it is to be represented by men who do not enjoy public confidence? What is now said of Sir George Cartier was formerly said of Mr. Lafontaine, Mr. Morin, and Mr. Taché. He could hardly imagine that even the Brownites imagined it possible to exclude the French Canadians from the Cabinet; but the *Globe*, when urging the substitution of some of the Brownites for the present Ontario Ministers, significantly adds, "not to mention equally desirable "substitutions in the Quebec portion of the Cabinet." It may be that Messrs. Dorion, Holton, and Huntingdon, are pointed at; but most assuredly, if Mr. Mackenzie should succeed in forming a coalition out of his adherents in the House of Commons, it would be, to use his own words, "a mere combination of men allied together, with the sole "view of retaining office." He (Sir F. Hincks) will not pursue the subject, but content himself with affirming that it would be impossible to find in the Dominion Parliament any set of men who concur as much in opinion on all leading political questions as the members of the present Government. The opposition, on the other hand, is a mere faction, bound together by no common principle, but grasping at power. He had dwelt, perhaps, too long on the question of the composition of the Government, but he had shown that Coalition Governments were invariably the result of differences among parties which led to the organization of three or more distinct parties, each incapable of governing the country with efficiency; that they were not only not inconsistent with party, but were invariably subjected to party opposition; that the present Government was in perfect accord on all leading questions, and justly entitled to public confidence, unless their measures could be successfully assailed. It was his (Sir Francis Hincks') intention to vindicate the measures

and policy of the Government from the violent attacks of Mr. Mackenzie, and he would first advert to those with which, as Minister of Finance, he was more particularly concerned.

The chief of these has been the alterations made in the tariff, and especially the duty on coal. He felt how difficult it was, on such an occasion as this, to enter on a subject of such magnitude as that of our commercial relations with the United States. Several years have now elapsed since the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty, and, during that period, the Canadians, who have always been anxious to maintain the most friendly relations with the United States, have entertained hopes that some satisfactory commercial policy would be adopted by that country. During these years we practically allowed the American fishermen the same privileges that they enjoyed under the Reciprocity Treaty, while we continued to admit the principal products of the United States free of duty. This policy was always held to be dependant on the success of negotiations, which were carried on up to the time of the last Session of Parliament, when it became clear to the members of the Government that there was no hope of arriving at any, satisfactory arrangement. Meantime, the people throughout the Province of Ontario urged upon the Government to impose duties on those articles which had been admitted free under the Reciprocity Treaty, and which, notwithstanding the abrogation of that treaty, Canada still continued to admit duty free. Among those articles were wheat, flour, Indian corn, salt, and coal. He did not recollect that any representations were made to the Government to impose duties on the articles named from the Provinces of Quebec, Nova Scotia, or New Brunswick; but from all parts of the Province of Ontario the strongest representations were made in favour of the duties in question. On a full consideration of the whole subject, the Government arrived at the conclusion that in the interest of the people of the Dominion generally it was expedient to adopt a vigorous policy with regard to the protection of the fisheries, and at the same time to impose moderate revenue duties on leading products of the United States which were still exempted from duty. That policy was deliberately adopted by the Government, and without any outside pressure, except from the Province of Ontario, which really is the Province which has most to gain by a liberal commercial treaty with the United States. It is true that during a few hours the Government yielded to the earnest representations of a number of their supporters from Ontario and Quebec, and consented to abandon the duties on coal and wheat. They arrived at that decision with great reluctance, in the hope that that they would be met by their friends in the same spirit of compromise.

When, however, they found that there was an irreconcilable difference of opinion among their supporters, they promptly resumed the position which they had reluctantly abandoned, and succeeded in carrying the measure in the shape in which it had been originally proposed. The policy has been eminently successful. The enemies of the Government in Ontario have not ceased to denounce the duty on coal, but they have preserved almost complete silence regarding wheat and flour. And yet it is a well-known fact that the effect of the new duties has been to give a very large trade in flour to the Province of Ontario. On the other hand, there has been a large increase in the consumption of Nova Scotia coal within the Dominion, and there can hardly be a doubt that when the Intercolonial Railway shall be completed, the traffic in coal will be increased to an extent of which we can have little idea at present. He had no doubt that there is a party ready to give up our fisheries to the United States, and to place them in the most advantageous position by admitting all their products duty free, while they charge enormous duties on our products. This, in his (Sir F. Hincks) opinion, is not the policy which will attain for us commercial relations that will be satisfactory to any Province in the Dominion. No one is more anxious than he is to cultivate the most friendly relations with the citizens of the neighboring States, and he will rejoice when circumstances shall enable our Government to take off any of the duties imposed during last Session, but he must state his conviction, that the attacks on the Government in connection with the coal duty have proceeded from interested parties, and from those who are at all times ready to seize on any pretext for assailing the Government. With regard to the Bank Bill, he would be very brief, and would only refer to the opposition which was offered to the Bill of the Session before last, and the acquiescence in that which was introduced and carried during last Session. He never was so sanguine as to expect unanimity on such a subject, but he was perfectly satisfied with the verdict of the Country with regard to the Bank and Dominion Note Acts, and to the manner with which the silver nuisance was dealt with. There had been many other attacks made by Mr. Mackenzie on the financial policy of his predecessor, Sir John Rose, and himself, which were based on the grossest misrepresentations of fact. The stock in trade of the Brownites was charges of corruption, extravagance, purchase of members of parliament, etc. He (Sir F. Hincks) would maintain that the finances of the Country were in a most prosperous condition, and that the policy of Sir John Rose, with regard to the Intercolonial Railway Loan Money, Savings' Banks and Insurance Companies deposits, had been for the public benefit. Mr. Mackenzie's speeches

were eminently calculated to damage the public credit, but despite the snarlings and misrepresentations of fact of the Brownites, the credit of Canada, never stood higher than at present. Our five per cent bonds were at par, notwithstanding the existence of a great war in Europe. He deeply regretted that Mr. Mackenzie, in whose British principles he had been inclined to place some confidence, should have endeavoured to mislead his audience by comparing the number of members of a British Cabinet required to conduct public business in two Houses of Parliament, with a Cabinet composed like that of the United States, which is not subjected to parliamentary responsibility. Mr. Mackenzie's remarks on this head may prove how little he has studied the subject. Mr. Mackenzie, likewise, made one of his customary attacks on the Civil Service of the Dominion, charging the Government with increasing the Staff, and retaining incompetent men. It cannot be expected that with a Service such as has existed in Canada, the claims of existing incumbents to retain office unless superseded for misconduct, being recognized, while there was no provision for superannuation, that there would not be many cases of inefficiency, but the government was fully alive to the necessity of improving the Civil Service, and their Superannuation Act of last Session would have a most beneficial effect. He had so much to say on topics which had excited much more public interest than those to which he had adverted, that he would content himself by affirming that he pledged himself, if he lived to meet Mr. Mackenzie again in Parliament, to expose his misstatements. The subject which has chiefly occupied public attention since the close of the last Session of Parliament, has been the Red River policy of the Government and the Manitoba Bill. He (Sir Francis Hincks) was well aware that much dissatisfaction had existed on the subject, not only among the supporters of the opposition, but among the adherents of the Government; but this dissatisfaction had been caused by the most scandalous perversion of truth, and he deeply regretted to find Mr. Mackenzie so unscrupulous as to persist in statements the falsehood of which had been so thoroughly exposed. The policy of the Dominion Government has not only secured the approbation of all parties in England, but, as it has become known to the people of Ontario, has commended itself to all moderate and right thinking men. (Here Sir Francis Hincks read Earl Granville's despatch to the Governor General, of 18th May, 1870, concluding as follows: "In giving an account of what has passed to the House of Lords, I had much pleasure in acknowledging publicly the singular judgment, decision, and conciliation with which your Government has acted since this unfortunate outbreak." He also read many extracts

from a pamphlet entitled "Red River Insurrection : Hon. Wm. McDougall's conduct reviewed," proving, by documentary evidence, that Mr. Mackenzie's charge that Mr. McDougall had been betrayed by his colleagues, was an infamous calumny.) He also shewed, by the telegrams from the Secretary of State, that Earl Granville had made it a condition of Imperial assistance, that "reasonable terms" should be granted "to the Red River settlers." (Mr. Findlay here put many questions to Sir Francis Hincks, quoting a letter from Mr. G. T. Denison, of Toronto, preferring charges against the Premier. Sir Francis Hincks replied to all Mr. Finlay's questions to the satisfaction of the meeting, which was manifested by great applause. At last Mr. Finlay called out, amid roars of laughter, "Oh, I give up McDougall ; you may whip him as hard you like !") Sir Francis Hincks proceeded to state that the policy of the Government had been throughout a policy of peace and conciliation, and he did not hesitate to affirm, that if the policy recommended by Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. McDougall, and others, had been adopted by the Dominion Government, they would have had no countenance from England, and would have had to engage in a war, the result of which would have been enormous expense and loss of life, and possibly, the loss of the whole North West Territory. This subject was daily becoming better understood, but it was altogether too large to enter on fully on such an occasion, and he would therefore content himself with distributing a number of copies of the pamphlet which he had quoted, which contained an impartial statement of facts. He now came to the consideration of the Intercolonial Railway question, and he felt assured that he could convict the Brownite faction of the grossest misrepresentation and inconsistency with regard to this great work. As a matter of course, Sir George Cartier is held up as the *bête noir* for the Brownites on this as on all other subjects. Mr. Mackenzie declared at Aylmer, that "all the expense of constructing hundreds of miles of railway had been incurred at the demand of Sir George Cartier, who was resolved to use this "national work to further his political intrigues." He was prepared to join issue with Mr. Mackenzie as to the truth of this assertion. There was, of course, room for a wide difference of opinion on the subject of the route of the Intercolonial Railway, but it must be borne in mind that the Imperial Government had a right, under the circumstances, to exercise a voice in the matter, as it was to guarantee the debentures to the extent of 30 millions of dollars. The Imperial Government has invariably given the preference to the northern route, which was that recommended about 22 years ago by Major Robinson, an Engineer officer, who could have had no such motives as have been assigned to Sir George Cartier. He would

read here the Duke of Buckingham's despatch of 22nd July, 1868, on the subject, and would put it to all impartial men whether it would not have been consistent with that fairness and honesty by which Mr. Mackenzie professes to be actuated, that he should have stated to his audience that one reason among others for giving the preference to the Bay of Chaleurs route, was that Canada saved \$300,000 a year in reduced interest by obtaining the Imperial guarantee. Here Sir Francis Hincks read the Duke of Buckingham's despatch of 22nd July, 1868, calling special attention to the following words, which elicited great cheering : "The route crossing "the St. John River either at Woodstock or Fredericton, *is one to "which the assent of Her Majesty's Government could not have been "given."* Already, in 1852, the construction of this most important work was indefinitely postponed, because the Imperial Government would not agree to adopt the southern line. He (Sir Francis Hincks), was at that time leader of the Canadian Government, and he could state, unhesitatingly, that Canada would have accepted the northern or Bay of Chaleurs line, and that but for the positive refusal of New Brunswick to concur in the adoption of that line, which was always the choice of Nova Scotia, it would have been adopted. He became convinced during his visit to New Brunswick in 1852, that the southern influence was too powerful to render it possible to obtain the concurrence of New Brunswick to any line, but the Southern. Canada and Nova Scotia were at that period compelled to consent to the dictation of the southern districts of the Province of New Brunswick, which were masters of the position. No doubt when the question came to be considered after confederation there were the same differences of opinion that had always existed. It was not likely that 13 members of the Cabinet would hold the same opinion on such a subject, and it would, in his humble judgment, have been most improper for the minority to have attempted to dictate to the majority, by breaking up the Government, which was the course suggested by Mr. Mackenzie. This astute statesman gives it plainly to be inferred, that had he been a member of the Government he would have broken it up on the question whether the northern or southern route should be selected for the Intercolonial Railway. A ministerial crisis on such a subject would certainly be a novelty ; but he had no hesitation in saying that it would have made Canada pre-eminently ridiculous in the eyes of the world. He would quote Mr. Mackenzie's own words to prove that he had not misrepresented that profound statesman : "The then liberal "members of the Cabinet, although pledged to support the short "route, disgracefully yielded, and voted for the longer one, rather "than give up office." And then it is alleged that the conduct

of Mr. Tilley is universally condemned in St. John. It is tolerably well known that Mr. Tilley did all in his power in favour of the southern route, but he is far too sagacious a statesman not to know that resignation on so untenable a ground could never be justified to his country. He would now briefly advert to the inconsistency of the Brownites regarding the route of the Intercolonial Railway. It is well known that in 1852 the negotiations with the Imperial Government for a loan for this work were broken off by Mr. Chandler of New Brunswick, and himself, because the northern route was insisted on. For this he was denounced at the time and ever since by the Brownites. He would have been justly denounced if it had been in his power to accept the northern route ; but, as he had already shewn, this was rendered impossible by the positive refusal of New Brunswick to co-operate on that basis. The same faction which in 1852 denounced him for not yielding to the Imperial Government now denounce the Dominion Government for having chosen a route not only insisted on by the Imperial Government, but recommended by the Chief Engineer and by the Commission. He would now advert to Mr. Mackenzie's statement at Aylmer as to the progress of the works. He says : " Well, on the 150 miles " from Moncton to Bathurst, part of which he had visited, there " were only 44 men engaged, who had 4 horses, 12 engineers, and " 2 paymasters with them." Mr. Mackenzie took good care, when visiting the Maritime Provinces, to avoid those sections of the line which are being prosecuted with vigour. He went by water from Pictou to Shediac, and then took a land route alongside of the sections which have only been placed under contract within the last few days. To show the reliance to be placed on Mr. Mackenzie's statements, he would give a few facts, which he defied Mr. Mackenzie to grapple with. The line between Moncton and Bathurst consists of 6 sections—viz., Nos. 16, 10, 20, 21, 22, 23. Of these, 4 had not been put under contract at the time of Mr. Mackenzie's visit, while No. 10 has since been re-let, owing to the unsatisfactory progress of the work. On No. 16, which is a section very difficult of access, the work is light, and can be completed in a much shorter time than the sections on each side of it. Mr. Mackenzie leads his audience to believe that there was a very large staff for very few men, concealing most disingenuously the fact that on the sections not under contract, an engineering staff was required for the purpose of preparing the profiles and specifications. Notwithstanding the declaration of Mr. Mackenzie that the road will take 10 to 15 years to construct, he (Sir F. Hincks) affirmed that the great work in question is making most satisfactory progress. He would read an extract from a letter which he had received from one

of the Commissioners during the period of their last visit—"I find "there are now about 7,000 men employed over the entire line, "which is as large a number as the labor market can supply without "causing a serious disturbance and rise of wages." He would state further that the Commissioners expect that on 11 sections, embracing 238 miles of the road, the track will be ready for laying by the close of next year. The remaining 12 sections are all under contract. The plan adopted by the Government for constructing the road by a mixed Commission has proved eminently successful.

He would say a few words on the question of immigration. It was the avowed policy of all parties to encourage immigration, but the Brownites endeavored to convey the idea that the Government was not sincere. Now he (Sir Francis Hincks) held as strongly as any individual the opinion that the prosperity of the country depended on a vigorous prosecution of public improvements and of immigration. He knew that his friend and colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, was as devoted and as zealous an advocate for immigration as any one that could be named, and the Government was sparing no effort to supply the demand for labor. Still he (Sir F. Hincks) must point out that the real difficulty was the apathy of the people themselves. Every effort had been made by the Ontario Government to induce the municipal corporations who had the means of rendering most important service to the cause, by taking a little trouble without any risk, but the result had been most unsatisfactory. The apathy on the subject was almost inconceivable. Of one thing, however, they might be assured. There was no division of opinion among the members of the Dominion Government on the subjects of immigration and public improvements. He felt that he had occupied too much time in discussing all these subjects; but he must say a few words in conclusion—he would remind them that he had asked their suffrages as a loyal supporter of Sir John Macdonald's Government, and he felt that he had redeemed his pledges; he was happy to be able to assure them that his honorable and learned friend, the First Minister, had been providentially restored to them, with his powerful intellect in full vigour (loud cheers). In the distressing circumstances in which, for a time, Sir John Macdonald's illness had placed them, he was happy to think that no man under similar circumstances had ever received a more loyal support from colleagues than had Sir John.

The Government might be abused by an Ontario faction, which was subservient to an unscrupulous and domineering politician, but the

sound public opinion of the Dominion would support the Government against the whispers of a faction.

He (Sir Francis Hincks) thanked them for the attention with which they had listened to him ; he had afforded his constituents every opportunity of demanding explanations of his conduct, and he would now conclude the proceedings by proposing a vote of thanks to the chairman.



